

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 01943 040734 Z

45

ACTION PM-09

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ADP-00 CIAE-00 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 MC-02 OMB-01

CG-00 GAC-01 RSR-01 ACDA-19 /102 W
----- 101436

R 040655 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0681

INFO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

DIA

NAVELEXSYSCOM PME-119

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CANBERRA 1943

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: MARR, AS, US

SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER COMMENTS ON PARLIAMENTARY

COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO PROJECT OMEGA

REF: CANBERRA 1763

1. IN COURSE OF QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD FOLLOWING
PRESS CONFERENCE APRIL 3, PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM WAS
ASKED SEVERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT
GOVERNMENT' S INTENTION TO HAVE OMEGA CONSIDERED BY
JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE. WHEN ASKED IF REFERRAL
TO COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE IMPLIED
THAT CABINET HAS DECIDED OMEGA HAS SOME DEFENSE
SIGNIFICANCE, WHITLAM ASNWERED IN THE NEGATIVE AND
SAID THE CABINET HAD NOT DISCUSSED OMEGA. HE WENT
ON TO SAY THAT PART OF THE PURPOSE OF THE JOINT
COMMITTEE INQUIRY WOULD BE TO ALLOW PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE
OMEGA HAS DEFENSE SIGNIFICANCE TO " VENTILATE
THEIR VIEWS AND TO HAVE THOSE VIEWS EXAMINED OR
EXPOSED IN PUBLIC". WHITLAM WAS ALSO ASKED IF HE
THOUGHT THAT REFERRAL TO THE COMMITTEE WOULD RESULT
IN A DELAY IN APPROVAL FOR OMEGA. HE RESPONDED THAT
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PAGE 02 CANBER 01943 040734 Z

THE COMMITTEE WOULD SET ITS OWN RULES OF PROCEDURE.

2. COMMENT: THIS HAS BEEN WIDELY INTERPRETED TO MEAN THAT THERE WILL BE A DELAY IN CABINET CONSIDERATION OF OMEGA UNTIL AFTER THE ALP FEDERAL CONFERENCE IN JULY. WHITLAM HIMSELF, HOWEVER, DID NOT SAY THIS NOR DID HE DRAW ANY IMPLICATIONS OTHER THAN REPORTED ABOVE.

3. IN AN EDITORIAL ON APRIL 4, THE AUSTRALIAN AGE GAVE SUPPORT TO WHITLAM' S REFERRAL OF OMEGA TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE. THIS ACTION WAS INTERPRETED TO BE PRIMARILY A TACTICAL, POLITICAL MOVE IN ORDER TO DENY A CONTENTIOUS ISSUE TO THE LEFT WING OF THE ALP IN ITS RELATIONS WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.
RICE

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Message Attributes

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Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Draft Date: 04 APR 1973
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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
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Handling Restrictions: n/a
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ISecure: 1
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
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30 JUN 2005

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TAGS: MARR, AS, US
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